



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wisconsin Guard joins Rhythm and Booms for Tribute to Armed Forces

When Madison celebrates Independence Day at the annual Rhythm and Booms fireworks show July 2, more than 3,400 members of the U.S. armed forces from Wisconsin will be serving overseas in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Gov. Jim Doyle, the Wisconsin National Guard, and the Madison Fireworks Fund, Inc., will join together to honor Wisconsin's men and women in uniform.

This tribute will include three four-round volleys fired by Army National Guard 105 mm howitzers. The salute honors 44 U.S. servicemen and women from Wisconsin who have lost their lives since September 11, 2001.

The 132nd Army Band of the Wisconsin National Guard will perform on the Celebrate America stage from 4 to 7 p.m., and will also accompany the armed forces salute when the main show begins at 8:30 p.m.

The Wisconsin Air Guard's 115th Fighter Wing is planning a flyover by four F-16 fighter aircraft at the conclusion of the National Anthem. This will be the 12th year Madison's F-16s have flown over the Warner Park event. Since 9-11, Madison's F-16 fighters have been either in the air or on alert 24 hours a day to protect major U.S. cities, and the unit has also been deployed overseas.

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The Guard will also display one of its UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters on the Warner Park grounds during the afternoon. The Madison-based 147th Aviation Battalion's Black Hawk will land at about 2:00 p.m. and be available for tours until around 5:30 p.m. The 147th was ordered to active duty in early 2003 and flew missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from a base in Kuwait. The unit will also provide a UH-60 flyover of Warner Park at 7:30 p.m.

Finally, continuing an eight-year tradition, National Guard 105 mm howitzers will accompany Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture finale of the fireworks show. The howitzers will be fired by soldiers of the Wisconsin Rapids-based 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, which was ordered to active duty beginning Aug. 10.

Nearly 70 percent of the state's National Guard soldiers and airmen have served on active duty since September 11, 2001. The Wisconsin Guard currently has 2,030 soldiers and airmen serving on active duty, including more than 1,100 who are deployed overseas.

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